4. Survey of Demography

In addition to the usual reasons for lack of precision in demographic data, common to all the African territories (absence or inadequacy of a registery office, weak administrative structure, especially in the medical branch), there is in relation to the Pahouin group the fact of their belonging politically to four territories, of which one is not French.

For the southern Cameroons we have at our disposal good census returns and competent, up-to-date medical information issued periodically as a result of the obligation to furnish reports at regular intervals to the League of Nations and then to the United Nations. The heads of mobile teams of the S. H. M. P. /?/, which have been especially well staffed since Dr. Jamot's campaigns, collect during each tour anthropological information /9/ as satisfactory as their multiple duties and the intellectual and social level of the surveyed areas allow. The military personnel provided in varying proportions by the territorial administration permitted many colonial officials, particularly before and during the last war, to make individual studies, often detailed, such as those of E. André on the demographic development of the Ntoumou of Ambam.

The situation is less satisfactory in French Equatorial Africa. First of all the Federation government has never, like that of the Cameroons, had to arrange for regular reports to be submitted to international agencies. Furthermore—and especially—meager budgets have often forced the administration to assign territorial commands—whose headquarters and location have many times been changed—to junior officers or to subordinate civil servants lacking the necessary training for profitable work in this field and hampered, moreover, by the very size of the thinly populated districts. For a long time only approximate estimates were available for Gabon and the Middle Congo, erring mostly on the side of administrative optimism, in no way motivated by scientific considerations. The situation has greatly improved since 1946, but the imaginary character or inadequacy of earlier data may well falsify the conclusions to a considerable extent(1).

1. Cf. Sautter, L'utilisation des documents administratifs pour l'etude de la population du Moyen-Congo et du Gabon /Utilization of

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administrative documents for population study in the Middle Congo and Gabon/, Bulletin de l'Institut d'Études centrafricaines, 1954, Nos. 7-8; Ziegle, Afrique équatoriale française /French Equatorial Africa/, Berger-Levrault, Paris, 1952, p. x; Christol, Un essai de fichier demographique au Cameroun /An Attempt at Demographic Classification in the Cameroons/, Bulletin mensuel de statistique d'Outre-mer, 1951, No. 20.

Finally, for Spanish Guinea the sources are rather inaccessible and of very uneven value. The best are probably the reports submitted by the scientific expedition of 1948 organized by the /Spanish/ Department for Morocco and the Colonies, of which the Anthropological Commission apparently made a study of demographic development in collaboration with the colony's health service: these reports I have not been able to obtain. The fiscal census carried out by Civil Guard officers in command of the "Demarcaciones /Demarcations/" seems to be considered a state secret; the census returns prepared by the Roman Catholic missions appear unreliable. If one accepts the total population figure given by official statistics, supposedly 172, 000 persons, it would be necessary to put the number of "Pamue" (the Spanish form of mpangwé) at about 50 percent of that total. Estimates made during the recent war by civil administrators and frontier officers of Gabon and the Cameroons are much lower, giving a total of about 130, 000 inhabitants, 50, 000 to 60, 000 of whom were Pahouin. Likewise, Spanish medical reports seem to be colored with a possible excessive optimism, attributing specially to biological causes a rise in population that results mainly from immigration.

In conclusion, the lack of agreement about even the composition of the Pahouin group makes the figures vary greatly, whether round estimates /10, table on pp. 12a-12e/ or genuine demographic indices. Thus we meet with totals that vary from 650, 000 to 1, 500, 000 Pahouin, with the differential index clearly positive or clearly negative according to the writer.

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My own estimate of about 820, 000 takes account of Pahouin only in the strict sense and leaves out the tribes whose affiliation is debatable (1). This group as a whole is growing slightly (the differential